

Chew Valley Lake Country Park

Approx distance 1 to 1.5 miles

Approx duration 30 minutes



A short walk, with very few gradients although it can be muddy in parts. Lunch can be had at the far end, before returning.

Please note dogs are welcome in this area but it is a country park and they should be kept on a lead at all times.

Leave site via Caravan Park exit and turn left down Ham Lane for approx 800 yards.

At the T junction turn left into a no-through road*, after approximately 100 meters you will see a well worn path into the wood on your right.

Take this path through the wood (in wet weather you will need to take care where you step, although this is usually the only potentially muddy part of the walk) until you reach a single file wooden bridge, cross the bridge and follow the well marked, all weather path for roughly one mile to the first picnic area (toilets available here if needed).

Pass through the picnic area and continue along the path leading to second picnic area, there are more toilets and the very nice Salt and Malt café (ideal for lunch or an afternoon tea).

After refreshments you can return by retracing your steps.

Note, Salt and Malt varies its opening hours with the season.

* If you walk to the end of the no-through road, bearing left on the Bittern Trail, you reach the glazed bird hide, which is open to all, with no permit needed.

About Chew Valley Lake

Over 270 species of birds have been recorded at Chew, and the lake is the third most important site in Britain for wintering wildfowl. It is designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and a Special Protection Area (SPA). From late July to February up to 4,000 ducks, of twelve different species, may be present, including internationally important numbers of shoveler and gadwall. Some 400 great-crested grebes gather on the lake in autumn.

Things to look out for on your walk

Breeding birds include great crested and little grebe, gadwall, tufted duck, shoveler and pochard. Hobbies often feed over the area in late summer. When the water level falls, the mud attracts waders such as dunlin, ringed plover and green sandpipers.

Summer sees large populations of dragonflies hunting over the water. These include ruddy darters and, later in the summer, migrant hawkers. Wintering wildfowl include important numbers of shoveler, gadwall, teal and tufted duck. Goosander, great crested grebe and cormorant also occur in large amounts.

The reed beds are a vital autumn feeding station for reed and sedge warblers prior to their migration. The winter gull roost is a spectacular sight with up to 50,000 or more, mostly of black-headed, common and mediterranean gull.

Chew Valley Lake often attracts rare birds, including osprey, the scarcer grebes and an American wader or duck appears most years.